What’s the hardest parenting decision you’ve ever made? It seems that today parents have it so much harder than in the past because we have so many choices. We have organic and gluten-free options as well as various medical choices, not to mention so many clothing options. And we don’t want to be helicopter parents, but we don’t want to be too lax either. Like most everything in this world, we’re trying to find a balance, and basically making it up as we go along, right?
And maybe I’m alone in that, but often it feels like I make fly-by-the-seat-of-my-pants decisions. Sure I’ve got foundational things I want my kids to learn and to know, but sometimes the day-to-day choices are hard that way. And I get tired and lazy just like everyone, and so when my 3-year-old won’t hang her coat up after I’ve asked/told her 100 times, I end up doing it. Sometimes, anyway…probably more than sometimes.
But one choice that I know I’ll continue to make with my kids is the way I want to teach them in how they treat other people. It’s great when my kids do well in school or get praised for their abilities. I enjoy hearing that just like any parent. But I know that the things I want to hear most from people about my kids is that they’ve treated other people well. They’ve been kind and respectful of teachers, other adults and their peers. Ultimately, I want them to treat others as they’d like to be treated.
And I honestly believe that’s the same thing our heavenly Father wants to hear, too. I believe that he wants to know and see that we’ve been kind and gracious, even loving, to those around us. He wants to know that we’re compassionate and sympathetic to the ones who aren’t like us or have even hurt us. He’s please, I’m sure, when we do well at something or when we behave in a certain way, but I’m confident that he’d much rather see a small act of love to someone in his name than to be successful in any other way.
And the reason I believe that comes from Jesus’ words when he’s asked what is the greatest commandment and he says in Matt 22.37-38, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind…. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.” Notice he says, ‘The second is like it’. I think he means that these two are linked because when we love our neighbor as ourselves, we are actually loving God. In loving God’s children, all of humanity, we are loving the Father.
And my prayer is we all find ways to love God deeply by loving the ones he loves. God bless.